

# Old Time Radio **DIGEST**

No.110

Summer 2005 \$3.75



BUD, LOU,

and HILTER

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No. 110

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The Old Time Radio Digest is printed, published and distributed by RMS & Associates  
Edited by Bob Burchett

Published quarterly, four times a year  
One-year subscription is \$15 per year  
Single copies \$3.75 each  
Past issues are available. Make checks payable to Old Time Radio Digest.

Business and editorial office  
RMS & Associates, 10280 Gunpowder Rd  
Florence, Kentucky 41042  
(888) 477-9112 fax (859) 282-1999  
haradio@hotmail.com

Advertising rates as of January 1, 2004  
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Fall issue closes June 1  
Winter issue closes September 1  
Spring issue closes December 1  
Summer issue closes March 1

All ads display and classified must be paid for in advance. Make checks payable to Old Time Radio Digest 10280 Gunpowder Road Florence, Ky 41042  
ISSN: 1083-8376



When *Collector's Corner* was passed on to someone else Herb said, "Let's do our own magazine, and call it *The Old Time Radio Digest*."

In 1983 in a small print shop in Norwood, Ohio Herb Brandenburg inked up his AB Dick press, and printed the first issue of the *Digest*. (Ezra Stone was on the cover.) His press wasn't designed to print the *Digest*, but that didn't stop Herb. His time printing *Collector's Corner* gave him the experience to get the most out of that AB Dick press. Every decision Herb ever made in his printing business was made with the *Digest* in mind. If I do that will it help with the *Digest*. It made him a better printer serving his regular customers.

When they quit making making paper plates Herb could no longer print the *Digest*. By then I was into computers, and was able to print the *Digest* with a laser printer. I will keep in going in his memory.

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# Abbott, Costello, And Hitler

by Frederick Van Ryn *Liberty Magazine May 23, 1942*

READING TIME • 9 MINUTES 40 SECONDS

★ It may have been pure coincidence that a short, fat, pugnacious guy by the name of Louis Francis Cristillo bumped into a certain Mr. William Abbott (tall, thin, and dignified) almost precisely at the moment when a former Austrian paper hanger was being sworn in as the Chancellor of the Reich in far away Berlin. It may have been another coincidence that Abbott and Costello (ne Cristillo), achieved their Great Ambition (a full week at the Roxy Theater on Broadway) just around the time when Adolf Hitler was about to gobble up Austria. It may have been still another coincidence that Bud and Lou were starred by the Shuberts in *The Streets of Paris* the very month Mr. Chamberlain betook himself and his umbrella to Munich. It may have been

But enough of this; let's face it. Let's put side by side the respective timetables of the Fihrer and Abbott and Costello. What do we see? We see that each and every major triumph scored by the Prophet of Horror has been followed—almost immediately—by a bigger and better contract offered to America's beloved zanies. France falls.

What happens in America? Abbott and Costello begin to panic 'em on Edgar Bergen's radio program. Yugoslavia, Greece, and Crete are over run by the Wehrmacht. What happens in Hollywood? Why, *Buck Privates* (Bud's and Lou's first film) grosses well over \$1,000,000! Hitler invades Russia. How about Abbott and Costello? Yes, you've guessed it. In the Navy (their second picture) becomes the smash hit of the other-wise disastrous summer of 1941.

What is behind this grim comedy of coincidences? Is Hitler "working" for

Abbott and Costello? Was *Mein Kampf* a gigantic, supercolossal trailer for those laugh epics that made Cadillacs and swimming pools available for two starving burlesque performers?

ONE is tempted to say yes to 14 both questions. Loyal Americans and excellent citizens, Bud and Lou hate and despise Hitler, but had it not been for him and that atmosphere, first of jitters (1938-39), then of outright horror (1940-42), which he created in this hapless world, Abbott and Costello would probably still be playing in some four-a-day grinder.

Tragedy and problem plays thrive in good times; broad comedy and slapstick come into their own only when the going gets really tough. A nation at war needs laughs as much as it does vitamins. It acclaims Charlie Chaplin in 1914-18. It idolizes Abbott and Costello in 1939-42. Not unlike Chaplin, who had been working for buttons when the world was at peace but who became a millionaire when the guns began firing, Abbott and Costello were every bit as good nine years ago, when they first formed their team, as they are now.

The trouble, if any, was not with them but with us. The America of the early 1930s was not in the mood to appreciate their brand of humor. Unabashed and unafraid, they confess only too readily that they have introduced not a single new gag on the stage, the screen, or the air in the last four years. Today, when their combined annual income runs into seven figures, they use exactly the same routines which kept them on a steady diet of hot dogs and hamburgers during their first five years of partnership. Way back in 1933, when Costello asked "Where do all the little bugs go in the wintertime?" and Abbott

nile adventure from the 1930's that focused upon youth and their love of fast cars.

"Jimmy" and "Billy Dunlap" were two young men determined first to win the big race in their "Flying Arrow." Later they built their own car, the "Constantine" and raced it to Red Mountain Grade, only to run afoul of some men with evil intent!

## RADIO HALL OF FAME

Philco, one of the earliest and best known names in the radio industry, provided wartime listeners with RADIO HALL OF FAME, an interesting and creative one hour variety program heard over the Blue/ABC network for almost 30 months, between 12/05/43 and 4/28/46. The program, at times known as the PHILCO

SUMMER HOUR, featured the music of Paul Whiteman, the comedy of Red Skelton, Harriet Hilliard, and Bob Burns; as well as the dramatic talent of Raymond Edward Johnstone, Brian Donlevy and Orson Welles. Radio Memories has two of these fine programs— one starring Fred Allen, the other with Gary Moore.

## REXALL PARADE OF STARS

Large pharmaceutical corporations, like Rexall, had the financial ability to sponsor and syndicate a number of fine transcribed radio programs. THE REXALL PARADE OF STARS, aired between 1936-1942, was one of these offerings. The music was supplied by a number of excellent orchestras, including: Ken Murray, Donald Voorhees, Glen Gray and the "Casa Loma Orchestra", and Pee Hunt and his "Radio Rogues." At one time or another, Fred Cole, Tony Martin, and Harlow Wilcox all were announcers on this quarter hour variety program.

## RFD AMERICA

WGN, Chicago's powerful Mutual network station, continued to reach out to the agricultural, rural audience in mid-America with

an original farm/quiz program titled RFD AMERICA. This fine show was heard for two years, from 10/29/47 to 9/24/49. For the first year, till 6/06/48, jovial Joe Kelly was the quiz master. However, when the program switched to NBC in July, 1948, Ed Bottcher, an Alabama farmer became the new quiz master.

## SHORTY BELL

Mickey Rooney, a top Hollywood film star moved from the movie lot to a CBS microphone to a star in SHORTY BELL. The hero of our series is a brash young newspaper man, a real circulation hustler who has a dream of being an ace reporter. The script, with a comic twist, was based upon stories by Frederick Hazlitt Brennan, and were presented in interesting interconnected episodes that focused upon "Shorty's" attempts to help his old buddy "Emmitt" from the clutches of the mob. Director William M. Robson tried his best, but the show only lasted three months between March 28 & June 27, 1948 on Sunday evenings

## SIX SHOOTER

Veteran Hollywood film actor James Stewart was cast in the role of THE SIX SHOOTER, the exploits of "Britt Poncett" an easy-going wandering Texan with a fast gun, who has set aside mv violence to lend a helping hand to people in need. This half-hour western drama was heard over NBC as a syndicated feature for eleven months, between 9/20/53 and 10/11/54. Radio Memories has the complete selection of 39 dramas in the series.



gag "as good as that one."

Bud and Lou oblige. Their scrapbooks contain 16,000 various routines, the youngest one old enough to remember the year when Franklin D. Roosevelt ran for the Vice-Presidency of the United States.

ABBOTT: Hey, Costello! No smoking!

COSTELLO: Who's smoking? ABBOTT:

You are.

COSTELLO: What makes you think I'm smoking?

ABBOTT: Well, you've got a cigar in your mouth.

COSTELLO: I've got shoes on, but I ain't walking.

Remember how you howled when you heard that one? Well, it may interest you to learn that even the boys themselves cannot guess the age of that gag. They feel certain that they used it on innumerable occasions when aspirin was still a member of the NRA. They feel equally certain that no burlesque magnate was ever sufficiently impressed by it to offer them a five-dollar raise.

The salient facts of the great Abbott and Costello epic are clear and simple. Both boys were born in New Jersey, Abbott in Asbury Park, Costello in Paterson. Bud's father was an advance man for the Ringling Brothers' Greatest Show on Earth, his mother a bareback rider. From the moment he was old enough to appreciate the difference between an acrobat and an elephant, he lived and breathed the show business. He sold orangeade, appeared in a side show at Coney Island, tried (unsuccessfully) to become a lion tamer, conceived the bright notion of gliding off the top of the chute-the-chutes in a square box equipped with silk wings and a stirrup, and finally, at the age of sixteen, wound up aboard a tramp steamer bound for Norway.

Back in America after seven months, he went in for sign painting and saved

enough to try his hand at producing carnival shows. The necessity of meeting the weekly payroll impressed him most unfavorably and he decided that there was more fun in being an actor. His first job was with Billy Minsky, the famous burlesque impresario. Instead of being a "straight man," as he is now, he was a comic.

ABBOTT won Minsky's confidence and was put in charge of several productions. A few years later he was on his own again. With his brother Harry he organized a burlesque company and opened Abbotts' Corinthian Theater in Rochester, New York. Before long the two brothers were operating six theaters. Then, as it did to all men, the depression came to Mr. Abbott. Wiped out in 1929, he was ready to accept any old job. Early in 1933 he was working as a cashier at the Empire Theater in Brooklyn. And that's when Lou Costello came in.

Unlike Abbott's, Lou's family had nothing to do with theater, circus, carnival, or any other branch of show business. Iris father, an insurance salesman in Paterson, New Jersey, hoped that his son would "amount to something." His teachers were positive that he wouldn't. One of them, Mrs. Bessie Whitehead, made him write "I'm a bad boy" on the blackboard 100 times. Little did Bessie suspect that years later he would turn that phrase into a veritable laugh cry of the nation, that "I'm a b-a-a-d boy" would be easily identified by millions of radio listeners as Lou's signature.

At the age of seventeen, having tried to become a baseball player and having been knocked out four times in as many prize fights, Lou hitchhiked to Hollywood. What made him think that he could act is a mystery which he has never been able to solve. His first six months in California were re-sponsible for the creation of several landmarks which eventually will be-



Bud Abbott spends with with his wife, Betty, and their three dogs

come a "must" for every self-respecting rubberneck. There is a Western Union office in Culver City, near the M-G-M studios, where Lou had to leave his then only possession, a gold ring, as collateral for a \$1.20 telegram. He wanted to send it collect (it was an S O S message to his father), but he looked so dirty and shabby the manager would not take a chance.

There is a garage on Wilshire I Boulevard where Lou washed ten cars in order to be permitted to spend a night on the premises. There is a delicatessen on Hollywood Boulevard where Lou worked for two days in lieu of paying for a couple of sandwiches. There is a gas station in North Hollywood-and so on. Nothing gives Costello more pleasure nowadays than to take his friends on a drive and point out those "places of interest."

Eventually some good Samaritan introduced the starving youngster to King Vidor, who was then directing *The Crowd*.

"Are you a stunt man?" asked Vidor, after one look at Lou's clothes. Costello nodded. Had Vidor asked "Are you a numismat?" he would have nodded too. His first assignment was a thirty-foot jump. Much to Lou's amazement, he managed to land without any mishap. His next assignment (in *Circus Rookies*) involved still greater dangers. Made up as an ape, he had to chase the leading man over the boxcars of a fast-moving train. Two years passed. Costello was beginning to make money. Then the talkies arrived.

"I can talk, too," said Lou.

"Not on your life," said the casting director, "not in that high squeaky voice of yours. You're through."

Twelve years later he was to be told that that "high squeaky voice" was his greatest asset, but for the time being he was through. So once more he had to hitchhike his way across the continent. When—he reached St. Joseph, Missouri,



*Lou listens critically to a piano concert by his daughters, Patty and Crole*

he decided to look up some friends whom he had met while hitchhiking to the Coast two years before. The first night in their house he learned that the Empress Theater, a local burlesque house, was looking for a "Dutch" dialect comedian. His acquaintance with "Dutch" dialect was very slight, to say the least, but that did not stop him from applying for the job. Much to his astonishment, he was hired. He remained with the Empress company for twenty-five consecutive weeks and would have stayed longer still if a visiting scout had not told him that a burlesque producer back East was anxious to find some one to replace Joe Penner. So off to New York went Costello, to hold his fateful rendezvous with Bud Abbott.

The rest is history, some of it a legend. It is not true that Bud and Lou are married to two girls who used to work as a burlesque team. Bud was married long, long before he met Lou and is about to cele-

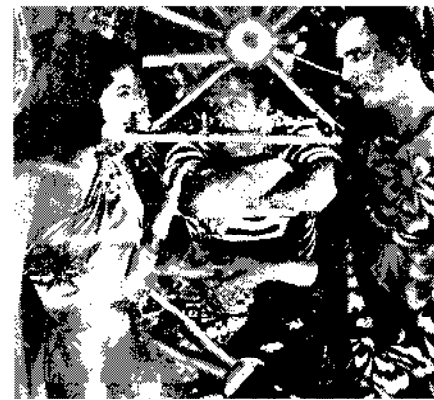
brate his twenty-fifth wedding anniversary.

It is not true that the boys have gone Hollywood and are living in palatial homes. Their houses can by no stretch of the imagination be described as "palatial." It is not true they are spending money "like drunken sailors." Caggy and cautious, they live far below their income. Abbott organized the William Abbott Investment and Realty Company to take care of his various financial ventures. Costello is as shrewd in his investments as he is in gin rummy. Incidentally, the latter game is the only sport they indulge in. They play for very high stakes, with Abbott usually the loser. How long will they last? For the duration of the war, certainly. Probably much longer. A few weeks ago a famous Hollywood director paid Bud and Lou about the greatest compliment they ever received. Trying to explain the tremendous success of *Woman of the Year*, he said, "It's very simple. The producers were shrewd enough to take a

leaf out of Abbott and Costello's book. What they actually did was to make an Abbott-and-Costello picture with Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn."

Their current picture, *Rio Rita*, recently released, is drawing the customary crowds. Their next, *Pardon My Sarong*, is finished and will come out this summer. But the boys aren't taking a rest. By the time this issue of *Liberty* reaches the newsstands, the two will be engaged in a most serious undertaking. They will be making a nationwide tour to raise \$500,000. The entire sum will be donated by them to the Army Emergency Relief Fund.

So remember, when you see "Abbott and Costello in Person" the next time, you'll be paying the army for your laughs. And it'll be a bargain.



*With Nan Wynn in Pardon My Sarong*



## Radio Oddities

- Not so long ago, "High Melody" maestro Paul Lav baritone soloist Earl Wright: both struggling unknowns.— Paul as a clarinetist with the band, Earl as a page-boy.
- Most incongruous hobby in show business is that of George "Gabby" Hayes. The Blue Network comedian, whose stubbly whiskers are his fortune, is an enthusiastic collector of—early American shaving mugs.
- Comedian Bud Abbott, who has 125 honorary police and sheriff's badges, recently added a prize piece to his collection. A friend with the Russian Army has sent him a Berlin police badge which he had personally re-moved from its owner when Soviet forces entered the German capital.
- Scripts for "One Man's Family" have piled up at such a rate, in the series' 14 years on the air, that it would now take the cast 43 days to re-enact all the episodes, reading steadily for 8 hours a day.
- Moving, motor-driven toys—invented and made by Bob Burns for his own children—have proved so practical that a manufacturer has bid for rights to copy and market them.
- Radio dramatist Arch Oboler started making money with words at a very early age. Inspired by his miniature zoo-ful of turtles, frogs, snakes and such, he wrote and sold a story when he was 10 years old.
- In 7 straight years of broadcasting for one sponsor, commentator H. V. Kaltenborn was never even late for a broadcast — despite many overseas and battlefield tours. Closest he ever came to spoiling that record was here in America, when his plane was grounded by a Virginia snowstorm.

# Privates Eyes for Public Ears

by Jim Maclise

Before Bob Bailey became that legendary insurance investigator Johnny Dollar, he spent eight years as George Valentine from the Fall of 1946 until September 1954, the year he took over the Dollar show from movie actor John Lund. The show was titled Let George Do It and Valentine, as in the contemporaneous Box 13 (discussed next) acquired his cases through newspaper ads: "Personal notice. Danger's my stock and trade. If the job's too tough for you to handle, you've got a job for me, George Valentine. Write full details."

Those two inevitable detective show stock characters, his girl Friday and his buddy/pal (take your choice) the police lieutenant were George's secretary Claire Brooks, better known as "Brooksie," who was first played by Frances Robinson and later by the ubiquitous Virginia Gregg, and Lieutenant Riley was played by Wally Maher. As that ultimate OTR encyclopedist John Dunning wrote: "In all, it was quite respectable for a canned show, but George was just another detective with gutsy style and a nose for trouble." The show originated from West Coast Mutual and was initially sponsored by Standard Oil before its syndication.

The episode "A Crime Too Simple" opens with fog horns, Coast Guard sentries witnessing a body dumped in San Francisco Bay, and a quickly dead hired killer employed apparently by one of three men returning from some mysterious South American expedition on their private boat. For reasons undisclosed, the police bring our hero George Valentine in to help solve the case. At the story's halfway

point, the announcer summarizes the plot thusly: "Someone hired a killer, one of three men. Well, the killer did his job all right and disposed of the only person (the boat's cook) who might have known whatever secrets there are. But unfortunately the killer, a mysterious man known as Three Grand, is dead too. So who hired him, and what are his secrets? Well, if you're George Valentine, you know that when a crime is too simple, the only way to get clues is to make your own." So George fires three shots, two from the earlier discovered murder weapon and one from the police lieutenant's own gun, into two walls and a piano at the three suspects' homes. Why? Search me. Something to do with making each suspect believe they're being targeted by one of the others. But anyway the case gets solved by everyone, except the listeners. The holiday show "A Christmas Letter" involves no crime whatever, other than that of interrupting George and Brooksie on Christmas Eve while they're cozily decorating his tree. Then suddenly the doorbell rings and a special delivery letter arrives.

"Dear Mr. Valentine, I remember reading your ad in the paper when I was still back home, and knowing you're an ex-G.I., I think you might want to help me because I sure do have a job that's too tough to handle. In fact at this distance (presumably Korea) it's impossible. So here is something I would like you to do for me on Christmas Eve. ('Oh no: No, don't read on further, George,' exclaims Brooksie, realizing that this romantic tree trimming is about to come to an abrupt



halt.) Enclosed is \$20. It's to cover the expenses of taking out the most beautiful girl in the world, buying her an egg nog or two, listening to some Christmas carols; you get the idea. Anyway, her name is Lucy Rand and she lives at the enclosed address. You'll be doing me a big favor if you'll be my proxy this Christmas Eve and write me all about it. Very truly yours, Dan "Red" Farrell."

Of course, Valentine is out the door despite Brooksie's protest that "Christmas Eve is fine up to a point, but that does not include a date with the most beautiful girl in the world." Nevertheless, with Brooksie in tow, they are on their way, slightly delayed by a thief trying to pawn off a wrapped brick as a fruitcake (is there a difference?) and upon arrival at Lucy Rand's apartment they are disappointed when she coldly reveals that she already has a date for the evening with a sleazy hood named Walter Denning who runs a burlesque Show called "Denning's Delectables." She admits that Red is

indeed a nice boy, but she never took him seriously, and "he'll just have to get over it."

So will our guy in Korea have his heart broken? Not if George can help it. I mean the man's name is Valentine for crying out loud.

Let George Do It is not a bad show, but it is so overshadowed by Bob Bailey's later triumph as Johnny Dollar, in which he basically became the character, (like Basil Rathbone owned the role of Sherlock Holmes, both on radio and in film) that I can't imagine too many listeners spending much time with George Valentine when those intriguing Dollar 5-parters are beckoning from the shelf.

Box 13 starred Paramount Pictures' meal ticket Alan Ladd as Dan Holiday, a part time newspaper reporter/novelist who had also decided to seek a life of action and adventure through a job wanted newspaper ad. "Adventure wanted. Will go anywhere, do anything. Box 13." As a transcribed syndication from Mayfair Productions, the program ran from August 1948 through the following year, producing 50 some shows (all available). Although he did have a lackbrain girl Friday named Suzy (Betty Lou Gerson), Ladd was the whole show. At the time, he was one of the biggest names in Hollywood and had starred in such classic Paramount films as This Gun For Hire, Veronica Lake's first appearance on screen in 1942, The Blue Dahlia (another film noir classic) of 1946 and even a pre-Robert Redford version of The Great Gatsby (1949) (which seems to have never been re-released in any format). Yet to come was what is perhaps his most famous film ("Come back, Shane.") the 1953 Western classic Shane. His flat laconic diction was surely a precursor to Clint Eastwood's style and in Box 13 he never strains a vocal

chord.

The initial program "First Letter" opens thus: "Well, this is great. Rain, rain rain. I'll bet even ducks wouldn't come out in weather like this. But me? I'm an idiot. I've gotta go and take up a profession like being a writer. I couldn't take up something easy. Oh no, not me. I gotta be a writer so I can be out on cold wet nights beating my brains out, looking for an idea. Idea, deadline. Oh sure, mustn't forget that everlovin' deadline. What a way to make a living. I could have stayed a reporter at the Star Times and had nice assignments, like listening to political speeches or covering the opening of a new manhole. Oh no, but not me. I have to write fiction, do it the hard way." Then he enters the newspaper office where he's greeted by his colleagues and the perky classified (but none too bright) clerk, Suzy. "Hi, Mr. Holiday." "Hi, Suzy. Anything in Box 13?" Cut to a commercial space and the opening caper begins.

The first letter is a request from one Carla Williams with her phone number asking for a call. When Carla's sultry voice answers, a meeting is arranged in the cocktail lounge of a local French restaurant. Carla is, of course, beautiful and in trouble. She wants Holiday to accompany her to a blackmailer's apartment where she allegedly plans to make a final payment and thus retrieve some letters she should never have written. Before leaving the lounge, she opens her purse, removes a small pistol, and says, "Here, take this." Yet she assures him that there will be no problem; the gun is merely a precaution. "You won't need it, believe me. I just thought it would make you feel better."

But better is not what Holiday feels when he arrives with Carla at the black-

mailer's apartment and finds his dead body on the living room floor. Against his better judgment, at Carla's desperate entreaty and her assurance that the apartment has no phone, he searches the corpse's pockets and discovers a packet of letters which he turns over to her. Then she offers to go down to the lobby pay phone and call the police. Predictably, while she's away, Holiday discovers a working telephone in the apartment hallway. Checking the pistol Carla gave him, he discovers one bullet missing. Hearing a police siren below, he mutters, "Looks like little Carla took care of that. And me? I'm leaving." But presumably the listeners will stick around for the resolution of not just this first case, but for the duration of the series. (Not this listener, however.)

In "Insurance Fraud" a Northern Life Insurance investigator hires Holiday to locate Dr. Max Alexander, who has a large policy and walked out of the hospital where he was performing brain surgery when his patient died, and has been missing for almost seven years. He can then be declared legally dead and his wife will collect a tidy sum. The company believes he's still alive, and when Dan interviews her she seems genuinely anxious to find her husband. But someone doesn't want him found and Holiday gets roughed up a bit and warned off, but nevertheless buys a train ticket to Albuquerque where the doctor's daughter owns a ranch. The train proves dangerous, the daughter is lovely, and the surprise ending is predictable.

"Designed for Danger" features Frank Lovejoy as a nightclub owner (always bad guys) and an escaped felon who believes he was framed for a murder and is expected to "settle old scores." The plot can be summarized in one line from

Lovejoy: "Johnny Tide will kill before this night is over." Will Holiday find him in time? Will he be reunited with his girl who loves and believes in him? Was he really framed? Do we care? But a word about Frank Lovejoy. His husky and unique voice is always welcome, even in a turkey like this story. He and Jack Webb are instantly recognized and always grip one's attention.

If you don't care for Alan Ladd, Box 13 is not for you. But there are some exceptional episodes. In "Daytime Nightmare" a Mr. Waring invites Holiday to lunch to discuss a job, then offers to drop him off at his apartment. But in Waring's chauffeured limousine, Dan falls asleep, awakes in a room with bars on the windows, and discovers he's not only been drugged but had his appearance altered, including his now black hair. He's told by a "doctor" Cordell that he's actually Edward Stokes, who escaped from this "sort of a rest home" some days ago. His protests of mistaken identity are ignored. "You sound almost rational," says Cordell, while a boxcar sized attendant named Hugo stands guard. "Do you know why you've become Edward Stokes?" asks Cordell. "Why, Mr. Cordell?" asks Holiday. "Because Mr. Edward Stokes is dead."

My favorite story is "Find Me, Find Death." Holiday receives a series of letters. The first reads: "Box 13, I've been watching your ad in the Star Times day after day. You want adventure? Very well, I think I can offer that. I'm going to find out who you are, and when I do, I'm going to kill you within four days. That gives you four days to find out who I am. Learn that, and you may stop me from killing you. But if you don't, at least you'll have four days of different adventure."

Now if you read Peanuts (Charles Shultz should be canonized) you know that Snoopy's perpetual story opening is "It was a dark and stormy night." The joke, of course, is that the setting has been done to death. But if you can resist an opening like the one in the above paragraph, you're simply not a radio detective addict like I am.

Next time: A copy cat program of which only one episode seems to have survived, and It's A Crime, Mr. Collins, who works out of San Francisco but who's no Sam Spade by a very long shot.

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# "Racism and OTR": A Reply

by George Wagner

**Editor's note:** George wrote this reply to Dave Reznick's "Racism and OTR" article. It was one of George's best efforts. It ran in the final issue of Collector's Corner, Number 34, Summer 1982.

It has taken me nearly a year since reading Dave Reznick's "Racism and OTR" (COLLECTOR'S CORNER, Summer, 1981) to calm down enough to reply to it. It is not my intention to defend classic radio against any of the charges made by Mr. Reznick. Rather, I am going to champion OTR. Oh Lord, am I ever going to champion it.

Radio programming of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, probably more than any other media, worked almost ceaselessly to eliminate racism from the American social conscience. Millions of Americans who had never known human beings of another race, or even of another religion, came to both appreciate and respect them through radio. People who had never met either a Jew or a Black fell in love with Jack Benny and Rochester. We will never know how many potential "American" Nazis were drawn back into the human race because of the magic of The Goldbergs. Equally, we will never know how many immigrant Jews, refugees from devastating European pogroms and suddenly thrust into a strange new world, learned through radio that they had little (if anything) to fear from their American Christian brothers and sisters.

Mr. Reznick charged that the fictional detective Charlie Chan was a racist stereotype. It is difficult to conceive what Mr.

Reznick meant. When Earl Derr Biggers wrote the Chan stories, most writers pictured Chinese-Americans as either laundry workers or as railroad cooks. Biggers, reacting against this arrogant nonsense, portrayed Chan as a Detective-Inspector on the Honolulu Police Force. Reznick found that racist, although God only knows why. I agree that it is offensive to stereotype people in menial occupations, but what in the world is racist about the idea of a Chinese-American criminologist? Calling Charlie Chan anti-Chinese is as silly as calling Sherlock Holmes anti-British or Hercule Poirot anti-Belgian. Mr. Reznick also objected to the fact that Charlie Chan is usually portrayed by a White actor. (He similarly lambasted Al Jolson for his minstrel type characterizations.) Here Mr. Reznick opened a very ugly can of worms, that of reverse racism. There is a widely-held convention today -- a view, largely limited to whites, which I find fraught with danger for a free society -- that states that while Blacks are perfectly free to play white roles (i. e., Jean Genets play THE BALCONY), Whites are never permitted to play black ones. In any honest theater, however, the most important question is not who plays the role, but how well it is played. To rule, as Mr. Reznick seems to, that whites cannot play Black or Chinese roles, is as offensive to me as ruling that James Earl Jones can no longer play Macbeth, or that Leontyne Price can no longer sing "white" opera, or that Yo-Yo Ma can no longer interpret "white" symphonic compositions. Such reasoning would also rob the theater of



*There bound scripts make a dizzy pile*

Sir Laurence Olivier's version of Othello. One of Mr. Reznick's "proofs" of the racism of OTR was the "coon" songs recorded on early cylinder records. Most of these songs were indeed racist, but what in hell do they have to do with OTR? Such tunes were recorded a quarter-century and more before the advent of OTR, so I fail to see any possible connection. Doubtless Mr. Reznick did seem some connection, but he should have been considerate enough to explain it to the rest of us.

Even so, a few calm words on these early songs may not be entirely out of order. The "coon" songs, as objectionable as these may have been, were part of the assimilation of Black America into the warp and woof of multi-racial and multi-ethnic America. In the years before recording, millions of White Americans not only hated their Black fellow-citizens, but they also feared them with an almost hysterical terror. The "coon" songs, in their crude and harsh way, helped to shave away a great deal of that hatred and terror, and -- in the very long run -- to bring us all closer together.

While we're at it, let's defuse that nasty word "coon." It is simply a shortened form of the word raccoon. "Coon" originally referred to rural southerners -- White and Black alike -- who trapped and ate a lot of raccoons. Daniel Boone and Davey Crockett were both early "coons." The word was an epithet directed, not by White against Black, but by city dwellers of both races against their country cousins.

Reznick also accused Amos 'n' Andy of racism. The evidence is entirely the other way; no other show did more to bring Black America into the mainstream of American life. The basic story-line of Amos 'n' Andy was of two Americans from the rural-south who decided to try for their fortunes in the great northern city of Chicago. The two Americans happened to be Black. One early Amos 'n' Andy epic concerned a White criminal who fell in love with Amos, (Black) wife and decided that he wanted her for himself. The White man attempted to have Amos framed, tried, convicted and executed for murder, so that he could then move in on the newly-widowed Mrs. Jones. This would be



strong stuff for 1982, let alone 50 years ago. But the American radio public, White and Black together, took it to their hearts.

Myriads of Americans who had never known a Black made their first Black friends in Amos Jones and Andrew Brown. Amos 'n' Andy taught White Americans that Black Americans were just like everybody else -- they lived, loved, cried, prayed, dreamed, hoped, feared, raised families, laughed, went to work, grumbled at the boss, shot off fire-crackers on the Fourth of July and gobbled turkey on Thanksgiving. Amos 'n' Andy did" more towards achieving social integration in this country than did any other force of the same years. I want to assure Mr. Reznick that I will never "defend" Amos 'n' Andy, but I will "champion" it with all the breath I have. After I die I will come back as a ghost, God willing, and praise it some more.

One of Mr. Reznick's main objections to Amos 'n' Andy was that the two title roles were played by white men. This objection is valid only if we accept the faulty premise that as should only be permitted to play those roles to which they were born. I answered that theory earlier in this article; suffice it here to state that no view is more fatal to a healthy theater.

When in the 1940s the Amos 'n' Andy cast was expanded from its traditional two-men presentation to a full-sized stage spectacular, it became the most integrated program on the air. What is most important, radio now had its first interracial marriage, between (White) George "Kingfish" Stevens and that magnificent (Black) actress Ernestine Wade. Television has problems with that premise in the 1980s, but radio carried it off -- with love -- in the 1940s.



During its early years Amos 'n' Andy was probably the sweetest tribute ever tendered by one race to another. In later years the program became an interracial love offering. But Mr. Reznick dismissed all this with the single word "racist," and that he would "have to question the intelligence or sincerity of anyone who claims they can't see the harm done by A&A." Well, golly gee, Mr. Reznick, by your standards I must be both helplessly mentally retarded and shamelessly dishonest, for I can only see the tremendous good done by Amos 'n' Andy. What Mr. Reznick saw as "harm" I see as exquisite beauty," and I treasure it as I treasure little else in this

usually-imperfect world.

Some of these same considerations apply to the Beulah show. Like Mr. Reznick, I am offended that at one time (and not very many years ago) Black actors could only play cooks, domestics and faithful family retainers; but I equally question his apparent objection that Blacks should never be permitted to portray these roles. Mr. Reznick failed to realize that during the Beulah years many blacks held exactly these occupations, and for that matter continue to do so today. Thousands of Black house-maids tuned to Beulah every week; to say that a Black domestic should not be allowed to hear herself portrayed on the

radio strikes me as a trifle high-handed.

The character of Beulah was originally played by a White actor, Marlin Hurt. He died a short time after the program went on the air, however, and the role was there-after played by Black actresses. Mr. Reznick found this all racist. What he failed to see was what an excellent actor Hurt was -- one of the finest in radio. Exactly how good he was can be seen in the caliber of the Black actresses chosen to replace him. The list included some of the greatest names in theatrical history -- Academy Award winner Hattie McDaniel, Ethel Waters, Lillian Randolph and Louise Beavers. Other Blacks associated with

the program included Dorothy, Ruby and Vivian Dandridge, Amanda Randolph, Butterfly McQueen and Ernest "Ernie Bubbles" Whitman; in short, Beulah was one of the most talent-filled radio shows ever broadcast.

Mr. Reznick mused that "what a black woman must have thought about taking over a part originated by a white man can hardly be surmised." Dave, I'll try to surmise it for you. Since the White actor was Marlin Hurt, the word may very well have been "flattered." Just like if someone asked me to take over a radio part originated by Hattie McDaniel. Wow!

I am entirely nonplussed by Mr. Reznick's criticism of Eddie Anderson's "Rochester" characterization on the Jack Benny Program. Rochester was presented as a good man, a humane man, a great guy, a faithful friend, a loyal employee, a trustworthy confidant, a wise and kindly human being, and an all-around All-American -- who happened to be Black. This is what Mr. Reznick meant by racism? As child I listened to the Benny show for several years before I realized that Rochester was black. I loved him both before and after. (Several friends had exactly the same experience with Amos 'n' Andy

Mr. Reznick claimed that the Rochester character was developed as "presumably inferior to Jack Benny. Me thinks that Dave presumed far too much!, I am sincerely sorry that Reznick saw Rochester in this light, for it says more about Mr. Reznick than it does about Rochester. To me Rochester was simply a friend. Mr. Reznick also found it racist that Rochester sometimes spent time with friends in Harlem. I don't even understand the charge. It certainly isn't racist for an Irish-American to visit friends in Boston or for a

German-American to visit friends in Cincinnati, so what is offensive about an African-American visiting friends in Harlem?

Mr. Reznick likewise criticized the Benny show for its portrayal of Mr. Kitzel. The inference was that Mr. Kitzel somehow represented an anti-Jewish stereotype. But the suggestion that Benny ever permitted anti-Semitism on his program is so patently ridiculous that I am not even going to answer the charge.

Even veteran character actor J. Carroll Naish came under Mr. Reznick's wrath. He condemned Naish with the snide comment that the actor "made a career not of doing realistic accents but comedy stage accents." Unfortunately for Mr. Reznick his statement is as untrue as it is ungrammatical. J. Carroll Naish was one of the greatest dialectal artists the movies ever produced, a brilliant character actor who made more than 130 major motion pictures in less than 30 years, who created a marvellous parade of fascinating screen personages, and who still found time for extensive radio and television work.

It is especially tragic that Mr. Reznick condemned Naish's characterization of "Luigi" on Life with Luigi. Mr. Reznick apparently felt that the program was offensive to Italian-Americans. This was, so help me, the same program that won all sorts of awards from Italian-American and other ethnic and patriotic groups, and which John Dunning praised in his TUNE IN YESTERDAY for its "warm, exaggerated portrayal of life for the minorities in America." The fact that the program was loved by Italian-Americans was totally ignored by Mr. Reznick, who deduced by divine fiat that it was actually offensive to them.

Mr. Reznick also claimed that radio was anti-Irish. "The more stupid the cop," he wrote, the more likely he was to be Irish." My own radio memories, on the other hand, are that the more incorruptibly honest the police officer was, the more likely it was that his name was Murphy, or Kelly, or O'Hara. By and large, Irish-Americans were portrayed on the radio as great Americans with red-white-and-blue blood.

According to Mr. Reznick racism "forced" Eddie on Duffy's Tavern to call the tavern manager "Mr. Archie." I call my own supervisor "mister," for goodness sake, for the simple reason that he is the man who pays me my salary. I'm afraid that Mr. Reznick was desperately looking for racism where none was even intended.

Mr. Reznick further stated that "racial humor in general did more harm than good." I strongly disagree. Racial and eth-

nic humor is exactly what kept the free world from going the route of 1930s Germany and Russia and Italy and Japan. Hitlerism did not break out because of German racial and ethnic humor, for Germany had no honest humor of this type; that is the whole point, and one that Mr. Reznick seems in woeful danger of missing.

According to Mr. Reznick, the 1980s see us "entering a frightening new era of reaction and intolerance." I entirely agree with him. But I think that he is confusing the effect with the cause.

I believe that we are entering this unhappy era precisely because we don't have Amos 'n' Andy with us any longer!

*A big Amen! I'm glad I'm in a position to be able to present this article, after 23 years, so it can be read again. It reminds us of those great years growing up with radio.*

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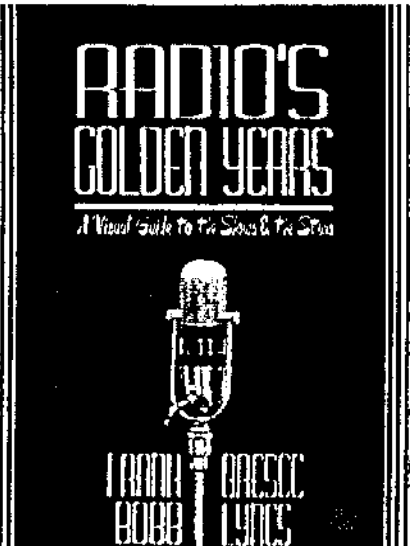
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# THE THIN MAN

NICK AND NORA SHARE HIS ADVENTURES  
TUNE IN SUN. 10:30 P.M. E.W.T. (CBS),

CORPSES to the right of them, blackmailers to the left of them, Nick and Nora Charles have been solving crimps for more than two years now-with considerably more nonsense than sense.

Somehow, the dashing detective and his slightly devastating wife have managed to keep their wit (if not their wits) about them, through all the weekly "Adventures of the Thin Man." They revel in situations which would make the most cynical police captain close up jail and retire to bee-keeping.

Nick and Nora themselves are peculiarly fond of jails. They take turns being locked up in them. The giddier the action gets, the more they love it.

By now, everyone knows that Nora never means it when she begs Nick to drop the detective business. And everyone knows that, although Nick and Nora are violently jealous of each other, they are the most happily married couple in radio fiction.

Les Damon and Claudia Morgan, who play the roles, are also gay, sophisticated people and happily married-though not to each other. In -private life, they have a number of other things in common, too. Both have always wanted to act-without any family encouragement. Both came to radio from the stage. Both have roles in "Right to Happiness," as well as other air shows. But there the Damon-Morgan similarity ends.



WHEN NICK GETS BANGED UP, NORA APPLIES FIRST AID

There was little money in the family when Les was a youngster back in Providence, Rhode Island. But his father wanted him to be an architect, so Les worked his way through Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design, as a carpenter - until his odd jobs brought him the chance he really wanted.

Called to repair scenery at a theater, he read some lines for a missing actor during rehearsals, and was hired on the spot. Then came a season in London, stock



*Tracking down murderers is just a hobby to Nora Charles (Claudia Morgan), but a serious job to detective-husband Nitk (Les Damon).*



*A grim "client" calls on Nick and Nora-for a strictly gag picture. Sometimes their customers are corpses, but very seldom skeletons.*

companies, Broadway and road tours.

Rugged, athletic-looking Les was playing in Chicago when he got his first radio role in 1938 - a \$21 spot that led to a highly successful career on the air. Variety estimates that he now makes more than \$50,000 a year. Les says he'd be glad to take a thousand dollars a week -if someone offered it to him.

Just the same, Les and his radio actress wife, Ginger Jones, often do some forty broadcasts a week between them and live in a luxurious penthouse apartment. Sunday is their only day off together, and they use it for entertaining some seventy-five United Nations service men in their own home.

Claudia, on the other hand, was born with a theatrical silver spoon. Daughter of Ralph Morgan, niece of Frank, she went

to exclusive girls' schools-but never studied dramatics. Only one thing was denied her. No one wanted her to become an actress.

So she changed her last name to Wright, and went on the stage, anyway. She soon earned the right to use the family name, has done thirty-some Broadway plays, had leading roles with both Frank and Ralph-on stage and radio-and has become less and less awed by the criticisms which her actor-relatives telephone from the West Coast after her broadcasts. Tallish, chestnut-haired, hazel-eyed Claudia is a fair physical counterpart of the Nora role she plays. But she's no Mrs. Nick Charles. In private life, she's Mrs. Ernest Chappell, the wife of the radio announcer.

**TUNE IN November 1943**

## Old Time Radio Series Reviews

by Bill Kiddle

**MICHAEL SHAYNE** (New Adventures of) Radio, during the 1930's-1940's, abounded with crime dramas and the exploits of private detectives. THE ADVENTURES OF MICHAEL SHAYNE heard in various formats for over a decade, from 10/16/44 to 7/10/53, did not differ greatly from others in the genre. "Michael Shayne" was a "reckless, red-headed Irishman at his old haunts in New Orleans." During the 1948-1950 era, Hollywood film star Jeff Chandler was cast in the title role, and the show was heard over either ABC or Mutual. Radio Memories has several fine episodes for your listening pleasure.

### MIDNIGHT

In recent decades, National Public Radio (NPR) has done much to keep alive the traditions of fine radio drama. For two short months in the summer of 1982, between July 13 and -September 9, MIDNIGHT was a serious effort made by Roger Ritner Productions to create some new gothic thrillers of the type originally made popular by men like Arch Oboler in LIGHTS OUT, one of the classics in radio horror programs.

### MIKE MALLOY, PRIVATE EYE

Steve Brodie, Well-known Hollywood film actor, moved from the film lot to ABC's sound stage in the summer of 1953 when he was cast in the title role of MIKE MALLOY. Unfortunately, the "luck of the Irish" did not attach itself to the program. The show, heard on Thursday evening at 9:00, lasted only two months, from July 16 to September 24, 1953. The program format was resurrected by CBS during the "latter days of radio drama" in a bit

more successful run from 4/03/56 to 3/18/57 when the show aired Monday nights at 7pm.

### MISCHA, THE MAGNIFICANT

Memories based upon one's past exploits or greatest fantasies was the comedy framework for MISCHA, THE MAGNIFICENT, an interesting summer replacement heard on Sunday evenings over CBS from July 5 to September 9, 1942. Veteran film and radio personality Mischa Auer was cast as himself- a Russian born actor - a man writing his memoirs of his youth. Each episode opened with the theme "The Volga Boatman" and Mischa explored dreams of his past as a lover, an opera singer. All this took him far beyond the type cast "mad Russian" image he portrayed in many comedy guest appearances.

### MISS PINKERTON INC.

In the days before equal rights legislation, few actresses made it onto the airwaves in crime dramas that focused on the exploits of female detectives. Hollywood film star Joan Blondell was cast in the role of a young woman who attempts to be a sleuth after she inherits a detective agency from her late uncle. This 30 minute program, heard over NBC in the summer of 1941 had an excellent supporting cast of Dick Powell, Gale Gordon & Hanley Stafford.

### MOLLE MYSTERY THEATER

The makers of Molle Shaving Cream and other products for men sponsored an excellent radio mystery program. The series was originally heard over NBC on different nights, and at different times between 9/07/43 and 6/25/48. The program featured the best in mystery and detective fiction from old masters down to modern writers. The stories were selected

and introduced to the listening audience by a host known as "Geoffrey Barnes" (Bernard Lenrow), a "connoisseur of mysteries." Radio Memories is pleased to offer a dozen of these fine dramas from the anthology.

### MOON MULLINS

For over six decades, the cartoons of Ferd Johnson appeared in America's daily newspapers. On 1/31/47 MOON MULLINS, one of Johnson's most beloved characters, tried unsuccessfully, for the second time, to make the leap from the artist's pad to a character heard on radio in a 15- minute comedy-drama audition. A previous attempt, back on 3/25/40, also met with failure. The unusual character of "Moon", his little brother "Kayo" who lived in "Lord and Lady Plushbottom's" rooming house, did not translate successfully to a radio comedy series.

### MOON OVER AFRICA

For over four centuries, Euro-Americans have sought to "uncover the mysteries" of the African and Asian continents. This quest had very marked racist overtones. MOON OVER AFRICA, (also known as "Talking Drums") was a 26-part quarter hour syndicated serial heard between 3/16/35 and 9/07/35. This program, which would never win any awards for "political correctness, is a product of it's era, and Radio Memories has the complete run of 26 episodes.

### MOVIETOWN RADIO THEATER

"An anthology of dramatic presentations" best describes MOVIE TOWN THEATER, a short-lived syndicated radio drama aired between 1951-1952. Like summer stock productions, this series was able to offer radio audiences an opportunity to hear some of Hollywood's best talent in leading roles. Sometimes the careers of these film

personalities were going up or down the ladder of success, others joined the "one night stand" for a refreshing change of professional pace by trying their hand at a new dramatic script.

### MR. ALADDIN

Paul Frees, well-known, and highly talented radio star, was cast in the title role of MR. ALADDIN, a young man hired to solve crime based upon his abilities to perform miracles. This interesting, yet short-lived program, was a summer replacement for BROADWAY IS MY BEAT, between July 7 and September 8, 1951. The program was heard over CBS on Saturdays at 9:30.

### MR AND MRS BLANDINGS

Eric Hodgins' best selling novel "Mr Blanding Builds A Dream House" became a very slick, three star Hollywood comedy about a city couple attempting to build a new house in the country, starring Cary Grant, Myra Loy, Melvyn Douglas and Reginald Denny. On January 21, 1951 Cary Grant and his wife Betsy Drake stepped before an NBC mike on Sunday night to recreate for radio what should have been an excellent situation comedy. However; the radio script writers turned out situations that were so far-fetched and far from comical and the show was blasted from all sides by media critics. The result was backstage chaos. The show, sponsored by Transworld Airlines, folded less than six months later on June 17, 1951.

### MR AND MRS NORTH

Frances and Richard Lockridge created the characters of "Pam and Jerry North" for their novels and short stories. The "Norths" came to radio as MR AND MRS. NORTH, a "average New New

York couple" who meet murder and mayhem on a regular basis. This light-hearted mystery melodrama soon became one of radio's most successful husband and wife crime fighting series in radio history. Although "Pam" and "Jerry" appeared to be very normal people their acquaintances bordered on the bizarre and an audience of 20 million listeners loved them. The program, first heard over NBC and later CBS, lasted for 13 years, between 12/30/42 and 4/18/55. Ted Davenport over at Radio Memories has an excellent collection MR & MRS NORTH episodes in his catalog.

#### **STANDARD HOUR**

Lovers of classic music, especially those residing on the West Coast, were able to partake of one of finest major musical series that spanned the entire thirty plus year history of network broadcasting. In 1926 the Standard Oil Co. in San Francisco financed the debt of the local symphony orchestra, gaining the rights to broadcast the one hour concerts over NBC on Sunday evenings. Over the years, the musical fare ranged from symphonic classics to light opera. In the Fall of 1946, the San Francisco Opera Orchestra performed "La Traviata", "La Boheme", "Otello" and "Romeo & Juliet." In this era Licia Albares (soprano), Jan Peerce (tenor) and Robert Weed (baritone) were featured vocalists.

#### **STARS IN THE AIR**

In 1951-1952, The Theatre Guild Players returned to the networks in a slightly different anthology. STARS IN THE AIR was an interesting collection of recreations of popular Hollywood movies. The short-lived series was heard on CBS from 12/13/51 to 6/30/52 on at least three different nights and times. There was "too much of a good thing."

#### **STARS OVER HOLLYWOOD**

For thirteen years, between 5/31/41 and 9/25/54 CBS aired STARS OVER HOLLYWOOD, an interesting and popular anthology of original radio dramas around the noon hour on Saturday mornings.

The program presented stories that were generally light comedies and fluffy romances. Most of the story-lines centered on college boy meets girl or show-biz guy meets budding starlet. Radio Memories has an interesting collection of these shows.

#### **SAD SACK**

Wartime humor, for the troops overseas in cartoon form, does not always become top notch comedy for a post-war civilian audience. The SAD SACK SHOW, starring Herb Vigran, Jim Backus and Patsy Moran, was a summer replacement for FRANK SINATRA, and only lasted three months, between June 12 and September 4, 1946.

#### **SOLDIERS WITH WINGS**

During World War II the cry was "Victory Through Air Power" and SOLDIERS WITH WINGS was a highly creative Army Air Force recruiting program broadcast over several different networks (CBS, Mutual and Blue) between 7/25/42 and 3/24/45. This music/drama/ variety show featured the AAF "Swing Wing" Orchestra and the talents of many Hollywood and radio stars, including: Henry Morgan, Jinx Falkenburg, Richard Dix, Francis Lee, Laird Criegar and Martha Tilton.

#### **SPEED AND DOUBLE SPEED**

Juvenile adventures came to radio in many varieties. Some, like CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT and HOP HARRIGAN, focused upon the role of youth in the air age. SPEED AND DOUBLE SPEED was an early quarter four, syndicated juve-

nile adventure from the 1930's that focused upon youth and their love of fast cars.

"Jimmy" and "Billy Dunlap" were two young men determined first to win the big race in their "Flying Arrow." Later they built their own car, the "Constantine" and raced it to Red Mountain Grade, only to run afoul of some men with evil intent!

#### **RADIO HALL OF FAME**

Philco, one of the earliest and best known names in the radio industry, provided wartime listeners with RADIO HALL OF FAME, an interesting and creative one hour variety program heard over the Blue/ ABC network for almost 30 months, between 12/05/43 and 4/28/46. The program, at times known as the PHILCO SUMMER HOUR, featured the music of Paul Whiteman, the comedy of Red Skelton, Harriet Hilliard, and Bob Burns; as well as the dramatic talent of Raymond Edward Johnstone, Brian Donlevy and Orson Welles. Radio Memories has two of these fine programs- one starring Fred Allen, the other with Gary Moore.

#### **REXALL PARADE OF STARS**

Large pharmaceutical corporations, like Rexall, had the financial ability to sponsor and syndicate a number of fine transcribed radio programs. THE REXALL PARADE OF STARS, aired between 1936-1942, was one of these offerings. The music was supplied by a number of excellent orchestras, including: Ken Murray, Donald Voorhees, Glen Gray and the "Casa Loma Orchestra", and Pee Hunt and his "Radio Rogues." At one time or another, Fred Cole, Tony Martin, and Harlow Wilcox all were announcers on this quarter hour variety program.

#### **RFD AMERICA**

WGN, Chicago's powerful Mutual network station, continued to reach out to the agricultural, rural audience in mid-America with

an original farm/ quiz program titled RFD AMERICA. This fine show was heard for two years, from 10/29/47 to 9/24/49. For the first year, till 6/06/48, jovial Joe Kelly was the quiz master. However; when the program switched to NBC in July, 1948, Ed Botcher, an Alabama farmer became the new quiz master.

#### **SHORTY BELL**

Mickey Rooney, a top Hollywood film star moved from the movie lot to a CBS microphone to a star in SHORTY BELL. The hero of our series is a brash young newspaper man, a real circulation hustler who has a dream of being an ace reporter. The script, with a comic twist, was based upon stories by Frederick Hazlitt Bennan, and were presented in interesting interconnected episodes that focused upon "Shorty's" attempts to help his old buddy "Emmitt" from the clutches of the mob. Director William M. Robson tried his best, but the show only lasted three months between March 28 & June 27, 1948 on Sunday evenings

#### **SIX SHOOTER**

Veteran Hollywood film actor James Stewart was cast in the role of THE SIX SHOOTER, the exploits of "Britt Poncett" an easy-going wandering Texan with a fast gun, who has set aside mv violence to lend a helping hand to people in need. This half-hour western drama was heard over NBC as a syndicated feature for eleven months, between 9/20/53 and 10/11/54. Radio Memories has the complete selection of 39 dramas in the series.



gag "as good as that one."

Bud and Lou oblige. Their scrapbooks contain 16,000 various routines, the youngest one old enough to remember the year when Franklin D. Roosevelt ran for the Vice-Presidency of the United States.

ABBOTT: Hey, Costello! No smoking!

COSTELLO: Who's smoking? ABBOTT: You are.

COSTELLO: What makes you think I'm smoking?

ABBOTT: Well, you've got a cigar in your mouth.

COSTELLO: I've got shoes on, but I ain't walking.

Remember how you howled when you heard that one? Well, it may interest you to learn that even the boys themselves cannot guess the age of that gag. They feel certain that they used it on innumerable occasions when aspirin was still a member of the NRA. They feel equally certain that no burlesque magnate was ever sufficiently impressed by it to offer them a five-dollar raise.

The salient facts of the great Abbott and Costello epic are clear and simple. Both boys were born in New Jersey, Abbott in Asbury Park, Costello in Paterson. Bud's father was an advance man for the Ringling Brothers' Greatest Show on Earth, his mother a bareback rider. From the moment he was old enough to appreciate the difference between an acrobat and an elephant, he lived and breathed the show business. He sold orangeade, appeared in a side show at Coney Island, tried (unsuccessfully) to become a lion tamer, conceived the bright notion of gliding off the top of the chute-the-chutes in a square box equipped with silk wings and a stirup, and finally, at the age of sixteen, wound up aboard a tramp steamer bound for Norway.

Back in America after seven months, he went in for sign painting and saved

enough to try his hand at producing carnival shows. The necessity of meeting the weekly payroll impressed him most unfavorably and he decided that there was more fun in being an actor. His first job was with Billy Minsky, the famous burlesque impresario. Instead of being a "straight man," as he is now, he was a comic.

ABBOTT won Minsky's confidence and was put in charge of several productions. A few years later he was on his own again. With his brother Harry he organized a burlesque company and opened Abbotts' Corinthian Theater in Rochester, New York. Before long the two brothers were operating six theaters. Then, as it did to all men, the depression came to Mr. Abbott. Wiped out in 1929, he was ready to accept any old job. Early in 1933 he was working as a cashier at the Empire Theater in Brooklyn. And that's when Lou Costello came in.

Unlike Abbott's, Lou's family had nothing to do with theater, circus, carnival, or any other branch of show business. Iris father, an insurance salesman in Paterson, New Jersey, hoped that his son would "amount to something." His teachers were positive that he wouldn't. One of them, Mrs. Bessie Whitehead, made him write "I'm a bad boy" on the blackboard 100 times. Little did Bessie suspect that years later he would turn that phrase into a veritable laugh cry of the nation, that "I'm a b-a-a-d boy" would be easily identified by millions of radio listeners as Lou's signature.

At the age of seventeen, having tried to become a baseball player and having been knocked out four times in as many prize fights, Lou hitchhiked to Hollywood. What made him think that he could act is a mystery which he has never been able to solve. His first six months in California were re-sponsible for the creation of several landmarks which eventually will be-

03/18/45 #91 Malaka  
Straight,  
Gateway To the SW Pacific  
Amos & Andy  
02557 10/08/43 Andy's New Wife  
10/15/43 The Maestro  
02558 10/22/43 Courtroom  
Catastrophe  
11/05/43 The Locked  
Trunk's Secret  
02559 11/12/43 Matrimonial  
Mishap  
11/19/43 Turkey Trouble  
02560 11/26/43 Man's Best Friend  
12/03/43 Candy For  
Caroline  
  
02561 12/10/43 Bookends &  
Babies  
12/17/43 The Marriage  
Counselor  
02562 12/31/43 New Year's Eve  
1943  
01/07/44 Making Sapphire  
Proud  
02563 01/14/44 Orchids & Violets  
01/21/44 Charles Boyer's  
Valet  
02564 01/28/44 Wind Fall  
02/04/44 Missing Person's  
Bureau  
02565 02/11/44 Three Times &  
You're Out  
02/18/44 Ruby's Diamond  
02566 02/25/44 Sunday, Monday  
Or Always  
03/03/44 Looking For  
Madam  
Queen  
Box 13  
00295 08/22/48 # 1 The First  
Letter

08/29/48 # 2 Insurance  
Fraud  
00296 09/05/48 # 3 Blackmail is  
Murder  
09/12/48 # 4 Actor's Alibi  
00297 09/19/48 # 5 Extra! Extra!  
09/26/48 # 6 Shanghaied  
00298 10/03/48 # 7 Short  
Assignment  
10/10/48 # 8 Double Mothers  
00299 10/17/48 # 9 Book Of Poems  
10/24/48 #10 Dan And The  
Magician's Assistant  
00300 10/31/48 #11 Suicide Or  
Murder?  
11/07/48 #12 The Triple  
Cross  
00301 11/14/48 #13 Damsel In  
Distress  
11/21/48 #14 Diamond In  
The Sky  
00302 11/28/48 #15 Double Right  
Cross  
12/05/48 #16 Look Pleasant,  
Please  
  
00303 12/12/48 #17 Haunted Artist  
12/19/48 #18 Sad Night  
Let George Do It  
C014/46 Audition Show - The First  
Client  
10/18/46 # 1 Cousin Jeff And  
The Pigs  
06300 10/25/46 # 2 The Brookdale  
Orphanage  
11/08/46 # 4 The Robber  
06301 04/05/48 # 77 The  
Smugglers  
04/12/48 # 78 Am I My  
Brother's Keeper  
06302 04/19/48 # 79 The  
Penthouse  
Roof

04/26/48 # 80 The Wolf  
Pack  
06303 05/03/48 # 81 The Tunnel  
Project  
05/10/48 # 82 The Spirit  
World  
06304 05/31/48 # 84 Island In The  
Lake  
06/07/48 # 85 Have Some  
Excitement  
06305 06/14/48 # 86 Hired For A  
Bodyguard  
06/21/48 # 87 The Unfit  
Mother  
06306 06/28/48 # 88 The Racket  
07/05/48 # 89 The Man  
Who  
Was Murdered Twice  
06307 07/12/48 # 90 A Close Call  
07/19/48 # 91 A Deadman  
Who  
Was A Murderer  
06308 07/26/48 # 92 The Seven  
Murder  
08/02/48 # 93 The Money  
Maker  
Lux Radio Theater (New)  
14238 12/22/41 #331 Remember  
The Night  
14239 12/29/41 #332 The Bride  
Came C.O.D.  
14240 03/16/42 #343 Manpower  
14251 11/30/42 #373 Broadway  
14241 12/07/42 #374 The War  
Against  
Mrs. Hadley  
14242 05/03/43 #395 The Navy  
Comes  
Through  
14244 11/01/43 #413 So Proudly  
We Hail  
14245 11/08/43 #414 Salute To  
The

Marines  
14252 10/29/45 #500 Affairs Of  
Susan  
14253 11/25/45 #504 Salty  
O'Roarke  
(Rehearsal)  
14246 12/31/45 #509 Pride Of  
The  
Marines  
14255 05/12/47 #572 Johnny  
O'Clock  
Twenty First Precinct (New)  
14271 07/07/53 # 1 Three Bank  
Robbers In Apartment  
07/14/53 # 2 Bad Boy  
Mugger  
14272 07/21/53 # 3 Bar Owner  
Murdered  
07/28/53 # 4 Twin Babies  
Die  
14273 08/04/53 # 5 Serviceman  
Finds  
Apartment Burned, Family  
Gone  
08/11/53 # 6 Policeman  
Shot -  
Suicide Or Murder?  
14274 08/18/53 # 7 Young  
Woman  
Check Forger  
08/25/53 # 8 Payroll  
Holdup;  
Secretary Suspected  
14275 09/01/53 # 9 Society  
Woman  
Murdered  
09/08/53 #10 Large Safe  
Held  
For Ransom  
14276 09/15/53 #11 Policeman's  
Son Dies  
09/29/53 #12 False Alarm  
Addict  
14277 10/06/53 #13 Numbers

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Comedy's Golden Age  
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07100 Radio Drama - Theatre Of  
The Mind  
Radio Drama - Theatre Of  
The Mind  
07101 The War Of The Worlds  
07102 Great Radio Commercials  
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### Tom Power's Life Studies

18895 10/31/35 Emergency Standby  
C-90 11/21/35 White Collar Job  
11/28/35 Not In England  
12/05/35 Them Beasly Twins  
12/12/35 Mr. Halletin  
12/19/35 Snow Looks Awful Pretty  
18896 12/26/35 Hobo Jungle Christmas  
C-90 01/02/36 Venetian Love Song  
01/09/36 In Conference  
01/16/36 Dematasse In The Den  
01/23/36 Radio Towers  
01/30/36 Mama's Boy Brogan  
18897 02/06/36 Lennox Local  
02/13/36 Tall Corn  
02/20/36 Sanctuary  
02/27/36 So You're Going Away?

### Life With Luigi

06518 09/21/48 # 1 Arrival  
11/09/48 # 8 Diamond Ring  
08303 11/16/48 # 9 P.T.A. Meeting  
11/30/48 #11 Medical Insurance  
08304 12/07/48 #12 Admiral Perry Mirror  
12/14/48 #13 Paul Revere  
17684 01/09/49 First Date With  
American Girl  
01/16/49 Surprise Party

08307 01/30/49 #20 Character References  
02/06/49 #21 Telephone Company  
08308 02/20/49 #23 The Cold  
03/06/49 #25 Income Tax Problems  
08309 03/13/49 #26 The Raffle  
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